

*Epicrisis Systematis Mycologici seu Synopsis Hymenomycetum.* Elias Fries. Upsaliæ, 1836—1838. Vol. I. 8vo.

Twenty years have elapsed since the preparation of the first volume of the 'Systema Mycologicum,' which appeared in 1821. Numerous species have since been published by the learned author himself in his 'Elenchus,' and in the 'Linnæa,' and various new labourers have arisen in the mycological field. The author's intention in the present work, of which we have here only the commencement, is to give short characters of all the fungi hitherto published or known in Herbaria under manuscript names. At the same time he takes the opportunity of completely revising the species, correcting errors, improving the synonyms where needful, and making such alterations in the arrangements and such new genera as the very enlarged number of species may demand. The difficulty and labour of the task can scarcely be fully estimated, except by persons versed in the intricacies of the subjects, though some notion perhaps may be formed from the fact that the volume, which comprises only the Hymenomycetes, contains specific characters of nearly 2560 species. The number of genera amounts to 65; of these about 28 are either new or sectional divisions of different value raised to the rank of genera. As it is, the genus *Agaricus*, after nine dismemberments, some of which are very extensive, still comprises 980 species. Of the value of the new genera it would be very rash to speak without careful investigation. The whole group is so natural that it is exceedingly difficult to define genera very nicely, though the species associated are evidently allied in a more peculiar degree amongst each other; and the characters assigned will be judged sufficient or insufficient according to the notions which individuals attach to the term genera, which are confessedly artificial assemblages; for genera do not exist in nature. It is at present uncertain whether the other orders of Fungi will be reviewed, as the encouragement to mycological works is so small, that even in the case of an author of such superior qualifications no publisher could be found to undertake the risk. The work is therefore published "sumtibus auctoris,"—a circumstance which we hope will be an inducement, not only to mycologists, to whom it is indispensable, but to botanists not so immediately interested in the subject, to become purchasers. As it was imperative upon the author to bring the book out at as little cost as possible, he has been obliged to curtail the descriptions as far as is consistent with clearness, to give only the most important synonyms, and to forgo a general index. It is painful to find the author after so

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